

Republic Saga - Vengeance

by Noggins

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Summary: A year after the events of 'Revenge of the Jedi', Leia Skywalker reaches an important part in her training as a Jedi Knight under the tutelage of her father while Lando Calrissian begins a journey of self discovery...

1. Hidden Allies

Title: Republic Saga - Vengeance, Chapter One

>
Author: Jonathan Evans

>
Author email: noggins@ic24.net

>
Summary: A year after the events of 'Revenge of the Jedi', Leia Skywalker reaches an important part in her training as a Jedi Knight under the tutelage of her father while Lando Calrissian begins a journey of self discovery...

>
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>
REPUBLIC SAGA

>VENGEANCE
CHAPTER ONE

>
It had been a long, long year but she had got through it. Leia

>had embraced the ways of the Jedi but more importantly the ways
of her family. It wasn't long after the Battle of Endor that she

>adopted the name Skywalker, feeling it was her duty to continue
her lineage.

>
She somersaulted over her father's head and landed on the other

>side of the room. They clashed sabers before Leia rolled along
the ground and got to her feet behind Anakin. She held her weapon

>to his throat and smiled.
"I think I win again..."

>"You are agile, my daughter and strong with the Force. I see a
powerful future ahead of you."

>"Yeah, you always say that when I beat you," she grinned as she
turned off her saber and placed it at her belt. Anakin did the

>same and put his hand on her shoulder. "Let's go, I have to meet
>with the Council..."
>
Leia looked at him inquisitively. "Are you going to take them up

>on their offer?" she asked.
"Not until I think you are a full Jedi Knight," he replied. "Then,
>perhaps I will. It is a great honour to be a part of the Council
but it will be a long while until we are back to the level we
>once were. Many of the Jedi have taken padawans so it will not
be long..."
>
The two walked out of a set of double doors and out into the

>main reaches of the Republic headquarters built on New
Naboo. As they made their way down the corridor they passed
>various aliens who were either members of the Republic Senate
or Jedi Knights. Leia greeted several who she had befriended
>during her training as they continued.

>The two stopped at another set of doors and they opened
automatically. Anakin entered first, followed by Leia. They

>bowed before the Jedi Council.
"I am here as you requested," the elder Skywalker said.
>"As well you should be," Adi Gallia replied. She was nominated
leader of the New Council. To her left sat Kas Grendor, a male
>Kel Dor from the planet Dorin. Just like all members of his
race he wore a mask to prevent him from breathing the deadly
>oxygen of New Naboo.

>Next to Grendor was Hela Zapalo, a human survivor of the original
Naboo. She was aged around twenty five with brown hair and
>matching eyes. A truly enchanting sight for Anakin, being
reminded of his former wife.
>
"President Mothma has began plans to retake Coruscant," Gallia

>continued. "She is requesting that the two of you lead the
attack along with General Calrissian. After your victory at
>Endor and other conflicts with the Empire since she believes
you are the best for the job."
>
"I thank you..." Anakin began but was interrupted by his

>daughter. "I don't think the Republic forces are enough for
a full scale assault on the Imperial planet as yet. We are
>still reeling from the near-loss at Iridon and I don't think
we could muster up the strength."
>"The Force will..."
"I am speaking from a purely military point of view here,
>Master Gallia," Leia said. "If we are to continue this line
of attack we must branch out, make more allies."
>
"Allies?" Zapalo queried. "In what form? Most of the races
>in the Outer Rim and some of the Core Worlds already have
treaties with us. Who could you be talking of?"
>Leia stood forward, bringing herself into focus of the Council.
"Several months ago I heard rumours that a small group of
>Mandalore survived the Clone Wars..."

>The Council chamber fell deathly silent. They all gazed at
Leia as if she was mad. She tried to ignore them and continued

>her speech. "I managed to get into contact with one of
their
ambassadors..."
>
"Ambassadors!" a Rodian Council member exclaimed. "For
>them to have ambassadors a race must be considering peace.
The
Mandalore are only warriors. Fierce, evil warriors!"

>"Silence, Yarled," Gallia said. "Let her continue."

>She nodded to Leia. "As I was saying, Ambassador Keylar
feels
that it is time the Mandalore came out of hiding and faced
>the galaxy. He is confident that his people will be prepared
to
join us in our battle against the Empire."
>
The six Council members began to quietly discuss this between
>themselves. Anakin turned to Leia. "Are you sure about
this?
Trusting our fate to a race that helped to reduce the Jedi's
>numbers during the wars," he began. "If it wasn't for them
the
Empire wouldn't have gained the strength it did."
>"But you forget, father," Leia replied. "The Empire took them
for
granted and began to mistreat them. They want revenge
>and we have the means..."

>Adi Gallia motioned with her hand and everyone stopped
talking.
"We have come to a decision," she said. "I have learnt to
>trust your judgement, Leia Skywalker, and I allow you to
take
this before Chancellor Mothma. What she says will be final
but
>we will support you in your plan."
"Thank you, master Gallia,"
Leia bowed. She turned to the door
>followed closely by Anakin.

>Once they were outside he smiled. "It won't be long until
they
grant you full Jedi knighthood. You have an effect on them
that
>no one I have ever known has had."
"You have to remember, my
knowledge is based around politics."
>"Of course," her father replied. "That is to be expect,
you
growing up on Alderaan."
>
The two Jedi walked down the corridor, heading towards Mon
Mothma's
>offices,

>* * * * *

>Lando Calrissian sat alone in his quarters, thinking
everything
in his life over and over like he had been since Adi
Gallia had
>told him he was a clone. And not even an effective clone, part
of
an experiment project that went wrong and had to be cancelled.
>He managed to give out a brave front in public but when alone
he
just wanted to crack up.
>
Perhaps if he hadn't reawoken the Jedi he would never have found
>out, but that would have meant the Rebellion would have lost
on
Endor. He put his head in his hands and tried to cry but he
>wasn't sure why he wanted to.

>* * * * *

>Chancellor Mon Mothma and Admiral Ackbar were discussing
the
events unfolding around them, both insistent that the Empire
>was weak enough for one final strike at its heart.

>"Coruscant is our best target," Ackbar nodded in reply to
what

Mothma had just told him. "With it back in the hands
>of the Republic I'd give the Empire another six months
before it
crumbles."
>"Exactly," the galactic leader replied. "But we must wait
until
we hear what the Jedi have decided.
>
With that the automatic doors opened allowing Anakin and Leia

>to enter. They exchanged greetings before the elder of the
two
Jedi spoke. "We have come from the Council."
>"Have they made a decision?" Ackbar asked.
"They have," Anakin
nodded. "But a request has been made to
>ensure victory is ours?"

>Mothma gave Skywalker an intrigued glance. "Explain," she
said.

>"I'd better leave that to my daughter..."
"As you know, I have
been in contact with the Mandalore,"
>Leia began. "Their ambassador has agreed to meet on
neutral
territory to discuss a potential alliance."
>
Mon Mothma saw the determination in the young Jedi's eyes.

>She had known Leia since she was born due to her close
friendship
with Bail Organa, her adopted father. All that
>time she never expected the girl to be the key to bringing
back
the Jedi. "As you know I am willing to agree with
>anything you have to offer. Have you started making plans?"
"I am
currently discussing a location to hold the meeting
>with Ambassador Keylar. If you allow this to go ahead I
can be
ready to leave in less than two days."
>
"Good. I will arrange a transport to take you there." Thinking

>the chancellor had finished, Leia made a move to leave.
She
sensed something on the other woman's mind and span back
around.
>"Leia, I do hope you're not planning on going alone..."
"I
was..." the Jedi princess said. "It would be better for
>the safety of the Republic if fewer people were there."

>Anakin put his hand on his daughter's shoulder. "I'll go
with
you. You don't want to risk the Republic's safety but
>I don't want to lose you like I lost Luke."
"You won't. I'm
facing a Mandalorian not a Sith Lord. If
>things turn sour I'll be able to handle myself."

>Ackbar shook his head. "I'm afraid not. Mandalorian armour
is
made using cortosis shields, a metal that is causes
>lightsabers to deactivate. You would have to rely on your
wits,
not your weapon."
>"That's what I was planning to do. I am a Jedi. I try to
take the
peaceful way in everything I do," Leia said, almost
>under her breath. Ackbar seemed to have something against
the
Jedi since the Council was set up. They were always
>the first to hear of developments, sending the Republic
military
further down the command chain.
>
Mon Mothma sensed the tension in the room and stood up. She

>addressed Leia with a smile. "You and your father will take
a
shuttle to the chosen destination. Providing the talks go well

>we will delay our attack until there is peace between us and
the
Mandalore."
>"Thank you..."

>* * * * *

>Leia returned to her quarters and sat at a computer console.
She flicked a switch and a small device situated on the edge of the desk scanned her. Several seconds later the blue, shimmering
holographic image of the Mandaorian ambassador Keylar appeared

>on a projection pad. Although she could not see his face, Leia
knew he was pleased to see her.

>"Ah, Princess," he said. "Have you discussed the plans with the
Jedi Council?"

>"Yes, and they agree. I will meet with you at a place of your
choice as soon as possible."

>
The Mandalore nodded his head. His body armour was slightly

>different to that worn by Anakin Skywalker when he had adopted
the persona of Boba Fett. The eye-slits curled up at the top

>and a traditional symbol of the Mandalore military was on the
forehead area. "I've considered that and I believe Chakran

>would be appropriate. It is a meeting place for smugglers.
No one would give us another glance if we were seen there."

>
"There used to be an Imperial garison there," Leia replied.

>"I don't intend to be captured within minutes of arriving."
"You're a Jedi, are you not? Surely you can handle Imps with

>little effort," Keylar continued with what appeared to be
over confidence.

>"Yes, but the numbers of our forces are small. We can't reveal
ourselves yet."

>"Of course... but I believe the Imperial presence has fallen
since your marvelous victory on Endor. They have most likely

>moved their forces to more essential areas."

>Leia remained unsure. "I would rather wait until it was
confirmed that they have been moved away."

>"I understand your caution. I will make sure that everything
is safe and will contact you tomorrow."

>"Thank you, ambassador."

>The image flickered away. Leia sat back in her seat, and
sighed. Things may have been going well, too well. "I sense

>fear in you, sister..."
Leia turned to see the ghostly visage of her brother standing

>behind her. A smile came to her face. "Luke."
"Here as ever," he said with comfort. "It has been a while

>since we last spoke but I feel you may need my help."
"You know me better than I do," the princess smiled. "So,

>what's happening?"

>"I sense a dark presence, Leia," Luke replied. "There is
something happening in the galaxy which could turn the tide

>for the Republic. The Empire is gaining strength again. It
is up to you to stop it while you can."

>"Can I do it alone?"
"You have our father and you have me. You will never be alone,

>dear sister."

>* * * * *

>In the central core of the galaxy, the galactic captial of Coruscant
sat, its presence emminating for thousands of light

years around
>it. For over twenty five thousand years it was the seat of
power,
originally for the Old Republic and now the Empire.

>
In the throne temple of Imperial City, a red haired woman
entered
>the massive automatic doors, each one carefully designed by
the
best scuptors in the galaxy. She walked to the throne which
was
>turned away from her. "I have the latest reports, my Emperor."

>The seat turned. The white skinned, red eyed Chiss, Thrawn
sat
comforably, his fingertips resting on each other. He smiled.

>"What do they say?"
Mara Jade inspected the datapad in her hand.
"The Republic base
>is located in the Outer Rim as we originally expected,
however
our deep space probes have begun to pick up signals coming

>from a certain area."

>"Indeed," Thrawn said, his face showing no emotion. He had
been
declared Emperor only three months previously once the High

>Council decided that a new leader was needed. He
originally
refused the title he now held but when Mara Jade came
into the
>picture he felt it was perfect to bring her into his fold.
The
Emperor's Hand. Palpatine had not made enough use of her,
keeping
>her in the shadows for far too long.

>"I suggest we send a fleet to attack straight away. If we
comb
the sector with precision we will be able to draw them out.
We
>could destroy them in one swoop."
"No. Not yet. They are too
weak. I want challenge..."
>"What? You can't be serious. They have us on the run
already!
More than we release to the general public. The Jedi's
return
>has caused more races to join the Republic."

>Emperor Thrawn shook his head. "Things will go well. They
may
have the Jedi but we have a secret weapon too." He reached out

>and stroked Mara's cheek. She wanted to move away but knew
that
her execution would be imminent if she turned against the new

>Emperor.

>"I still don't think..." the woman began but Thrawn
interrupted.
"It is what Palpatine would have wanted..."

>
Mara fell silent. These words had a strong effect on her. It was

>because of her loyalty to her former master that she even put
up
with the alien insurper. She nodded.
>"Of course..."

> TO BE CONTINUED...

2. Dire Situations

Title: Republic Saga - Vengeance, Chapter Two

>
Author: Jonathan Evans
>
Author email: noggins@ic24.net
>
Summary: Leia travels to the meeting place with the Mandalorian ambassador but is attacked on the way while Mara Jade and Anakin have their first encounter...
>
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>
REPUBLIC SAGA

>VENGEANCE
CHAPTER TWO

>
"Entering hyperspace.... NOW!" Anakin called as the small shuttle

>with barely enough room for two people was enveloped in a flourescent
blue light. He turned to Leia and smiled. "Well, nothing's gone

>wrong yet."
"And I hope nothing does," she replied carefully. "This mission

>is too important for the Republic. If we don't get the Mandalore
to join us I know Mon Mothma will launch an attack on Coruscant."

>"And are you so sure that attack will fail?" her father asked.
"You told me yourself you have the ability to see things before

>they happen. Haven't you forseen the danger?"
"My powers have gone dim in the years couldn't use them. Or

>perhaps they have been passed down to you..."
"Either way, I have a feeling something's going to go wrong if

>we don't do this."

>She flicked a few switches, activating the autopilot and leaned
back in her seat, twirling the braid that came down over her

>left ear. "I still don't see why I have to have these things,"
she pondered. "Sure, they're the traditional style of apprentices

>but Luke never had to have one."
"Obviously Obi-Wan felt that since it was an emergency to get

>to Alderaan to rescue you he didn't have time to sit Luke down
and cut his hair," Anakin laughed. Leia jabbed him in the side

>with a smile. "Okay, okay. He probably felt it was passed its
time, however the Council doesn't. You're my padawan learner

>and so you should have the braids. At least you get two. I
only had one when I was training."

>"I don't think two would have suited you, father," Leia grinned.

>Anakin reached behind his seat and pulled out a datapad with
the mission instructions on it. He switched it on and read the

>information for what was probably the hundredth time. His face
became serious again. "Are you sure our contact was right about

>the Empire having left Chakran? I'd have thought they'd want
to ensure the smugglers didn't get out of control."

>"That's what I thought, but Keylar has reassured me."
The elder Skywalker nodded. "I would say never to trust a

>Mandalore but it is time we put our old predjudices behind us
and look to the future. It is the only way we can end this

>conflict for good..."

>* * * * *

>Lando entered the resting area in the Republic base on New Naboo.
He looked carefully around to see if anyone he knew was there.

>Wedge Antilles noticed him and smiled. Lando realised it was too
late to escape now. "Hey, General! Come over here!"

>He smiled gracefully and sat next to the leader of Rogue
Squadren. "Hi, Wedge," he said.

>"So, what've you been up to? I haven't had a chance to speak
to you for weeks."

>"I've been keeping myself busy, I guess." Lando squirmed a little.
He didn't really want to talk to anyone right now but was too

>polite to get out of this conversation.

>"I heard you were thinking of going back to Bespin," Wedge said
trying desperately to get information out of the Republic officer.

>He sensed the atmosphere was tense too but knew Calrissian needed
someone to talk to.

>"Well, I have considered but it'd take way too long to retire
from the Republic gracefully."

>"So you are considering it?"
"Yeah. I want to go back to when things were a hell of a lot

>simpler. Plus I'm not going to be at risk from the Empire now.
I doubt they'd care about some two-credit gas mine now they're

>practically on the run."

>Wedge shook his head. He knew what was going on more than most.
He'd been on the front line since he'd signed up and things

>were not just going to fall into their hands that easy.

"If
they're anything, on the run is not it," he said. "I've been

>in quite a few battles over the last two months and they're
gaining strength. Rumours are going around that they've got

>a new leader."
"Impossible. I hate to say it but no one could rally the troops

>like ol' Palpy."
"All they need is fear to put them in line. I'm sure they've

>found just the person to do it."

>Lando refused to believe it. He sighed and looked around. The
kid had tricked him into talking but he realised that he really

>didn't care about the Empire any more. Part of him, he thought,
wouldn't mind if a fleet of Star Destroyers attacked New Naboo

>and wiped it out right now. At least then he wouldn't have
anything to bother him.

>"Look, Wedge, I gotta go..." he said making his excuses.
"You only just got here."

>"I know, but now I gotta go."

>Lando got up and walked out of the room. Antilles watched
carefully as the now almost broken man disappeared behind the

>door. The pilot was beginning to worry about the general but
he just couldn't work out what was wrong. It all started back

>after the victory at Endor. That Jedi Adi Gallia took him
away to talk to and he wasn't the same again. For a while

>Wedge thought maybe he'd tried to make a move on her and

she
turned him down but a year was too long for Calrissian to

>be suffering from heartache. Way too long.

>* * * * *

>A loud bleeping sound coming from the console woke Anakin with
a start. He checked the computer read out and shook Leia.

>"We're coming out of hyperspace!" he told her. She quickly
came to her senses and took control of the shuttle again as

>the darkness of space became visible at the end of the blue,
swirling tunnel.

>
The shuttle shot out and the portal disappeared behind them.

>Inside, Anakin checked the star charts. "We're several parsecs
from Chakran. Shouldn't take us too long to get there now."

>"Good. The sooner we get this over with the better." Leia pressed
several buttons on the control pad and readjusted the course

>they were taking to head straight for the moon.

>Anakin looked out of the window to see the stars rushing by.
A feeling suddenly hit him. "Move! Quickly!"

>"Wha- What?" Leia stuttered as her father pushed a control
to move the ship away from its current position. Just as he

>did an Imperial Star Destroyer emerged from hyperspace.
"That was too close," the older of the two Jedi sighed.

>"We're not out of it yet!" Leia replied. "They want to open
a communication with us! What are we supposed to tell them?"

>
"Leave it to me," Anakin said taking over the situation. He

>flicked the comm-link on and waited for the Imperial commander
on the other end to speak.

>"Unidentified vessel, please submit your name and reason for
being here."

>"I, uh, My name is Keldor Drailik," Skywalker said, adopting
a completely different and convincingly fearful voice. Leia

>honestly didn't know her father had it in him. Anakin

continued,
"I'm delivering spare parts to the outpost on Chakran."

>
There was a pause. Leia looked at her father. "Do you think

>they suspect anything?"
"I'm not sure. However, I sense something disturbing."

>The officer spoke again. "Our sensor detect a high midi-chlorian
count in your vessel. Are you transporting Jedi?"

>
"I didn't know they had that kind of technology!" Leia whispered.

>"Neither did I. I guess they're getting sensible in their old
age."

>"That's hardly a good thing for us is it?"
The voice came from the speaker for a third time. "Do you copy?"

>Are you transporting Jedi?"

>Anakin began to work quickly at the hyperspace computer.

His
daughter turned to him with shock. "What are you trying to do?"

>There's no way we can enter lightspeed this close to the planet!"
"Just watch me..."

>He pressed a button and the engines began to whirr but it soon
became a louder roar. Anakin pressed a button and the light

>surrounded them again. Suddenly the console exploded as a
blast from the Star Destroyer hit them. "Too late!" he
>cursed himself.

>"We have to get to the planet!" Leia shouted. "I'm putting
us on manual." She took control and built the speed up to
>the highest she could get it before beginning to short
journey to the planet, swerving to avoid the laser blasts
>coming at them from the hundreds of gun mounts along the
Star Destroyer. She fell from the pattern and one hit them,
>followed by another. "I can't maintain control for much
longer!"

>"Stay here," Anakin told her. "We're going to have to
split up!"

>
He rushed from his seat into the cargo bay, by far the largest
>part of the shuttle as Leia tried her best to avoid
certain
destruction. "Shields are down! Whatever you're planning
do
>it..."

>Before she could finish what she was saying, an X-wing
flew out of the back of the shuttle and headed towards the
>Imperial Cruiser, drawing its fire away from the shuttle.
A different voice came through the comm-channel - Anakin's.
>"Get to the moon," he told his daughter. "I'll meet you
there as soon as I can."
>"Be careful..."
"When am I not careful?" he joked.
>
Leia piloted the shuttle safely to her destination, made

>easier by her father's reckless but brave attack against
the Empire. The probes orbiting Chakran were easy to get
>passed and soon she was landing on a docking platform
around
fifty kilometres above the poisonous surface of the moon

>once used for mining but leaving it scarred and inhospitable.

>She left the ship and put her Jedi robes on, covering her
face so that she could not be recognised. Jedi were supposed
>to remain as anonymous as possible but that wasn't likely
for Leia with her notorious past as a princess, senator and
>Rebel leader. She walked into a cantina and looked around
for Ambassador Keylar. Surely he would not be wearing
>his Mandalorian in such a public place.

>She walked passed a group of insectoid Yam'rii, their stick-
like arms rubbing together in order to communicate with
>each other in loud clicking sounds. Beyond them a black and
grey haired Wookiee growled at a Gran for not paying him what
>was due. Leia once hated everything about space pirates
and
smugglers but then she fell in love with one and everything

>changed. They couldn't all be like Han, that just wasn't
possible but she now understood what they had to go through
>to survive. Once you had a criminal record in the Old
Republic
and the Empire it would tarnish you for life and you
could never
>go back to honest work yet at the same time they were being
used for taken stolen technology back to the corrupt
>senators who made the most they could out of the
current
situation. Things were changing but it could never be
right

>until the Imperial control was vanquished.

>A gloved hand came down on her shoulder. Leia turned around,
her hand stroking the chrome plating of her lightsaber. Another

>cloaked figure stood behind her but just under it she could
see the distinctive Mandalore mask. Well, he was trying to
>remain unseen even if he insisted on keeping his head-piece
on. She wondered for a moment what a Mandalore looked like
>under all of that armour. She brought herself back to her
senses as he spoke.
>"Excuse me, do you know where you can purchase a
hurllothrumbic
generator?" he whispered.
>She nodded. "You could try the Hutt stall just around
the
corner."
>"Will it have what I want?"
"It has everything from hyperspace
power coils to maintenance
>droids..."

>Keylar smiled. They had both gone through the code
correctly.
"So, you're Princess Leia Organa," he said.
>"I am a Skywalker now."
"Of course, but such information doesn't
always reach our
>humble planet. Come, come, sit over here." He pulled out a
seat
at an empty table and Leia sat. He took another one
>opposite her. If she didn't know better he was smiling.
"I didn't
think you were coming alone," he mused, prying
>for more information.
"We were caught by a Star Destroyer just
after we came from
>hyperspace. My father took a fight to draw them away. I only
hope
he's okay," she replied. "You didn't know anything about
>that did you?"
"Why... why would I?" he asked.
>"It was just they were looking for Jedi. Strange, isn't
it?"
"Yes. Very..."
>
* * * * *
>
Anakin pulled the X-wing up to avoid fire from one angle but was

>hit by another barrage from his left. The fighter shuddered as
the
shield dropped further. "To hell with this," he muttered. He

>switched the deflector shields to full aft and made a run
for
Chakran, getting hit by lasers and the occasional proton
torpedo.
>The shields drained even further. He pushed the speed up to
its
maximum but a shot hit one of the engines. It exploded in an

>array of colors.

>Anakin gripped onto the joystick harder than ever,
desperately
trying to maintain balance but was failing miserably.
There
>was only one thing he could think of. He smiled as he
said
something he hadn't for over thirty years. "I'll try
spinning,
>that's a good trick!"

>He turned the controls and the X-wing seemed to turn over
and
over, seemingly out of control but successfully avoiding the

>blasts that were coming towards it. The smuggler's moon
was
getting ever closer and Anakin just knew he was going to make

>it. Just a few more seconds and he'd be out of firing range.
Just
a few more seconds...

>
A lucky shot hit on of the other engines. The spinning craft

>increased in speed and the control console exploded. Anakin
was no longer able to maintain the X-wing as it headed towards
>the surface, nowhere near the area where he planned to meet
Leia.

>* * * * *

>"And you think it would benefit both parties?" Keylar
asked,
knowing full well he was not going to lose out on this deal
- for

>his own sake. "My people will not join you unless..."
"The
Mandalore will receive immediate entry into the Republic
>as well as pardoning for any actions that occurred during the
Clone
Wars."

>"That is a remarkable offer, but are you in a position to
make
it?"

>"Of course. I spoke with Chancellor Mothma before leaving
our
base. I know exactly what is in my right to offer."

>
Keylar stopped and put his hand on his chin. He thought over

>everything carefully. His people had entrusted him with
this
position and he wasn't going to lose it for a mistake he made

>here. As far as he knew, once they joined, the Republic
would
wipe their race out for the crimes committed decades earlier.

>"I'm still not sure. I want to believe you but..."
"But?"

>"The Jedi do not trust my people and they are powerful enough
to
find a way to destroy us."

>"I know the Jedi Council. They too have agreed with everything
I
have said. They want peace just as much as we do."

>"Peace, perhaps," the Mandalore frowned. "But for what
reason?
For our aid in going to war?"

>"It is not like that. The Empire is a threat to the
entire
galaxy."

>Keylar shook his head. "They don't know about us."
"Maybe so, but
they will find you eventually and they will wipe
>you out. A treaty with the Republic would be beneficial for
all
concerned."

>
Leia gripped her left hand with her right. She held tightly as

>she waited nervously for the ambassador's final decision
knowing
it could mean life or death for all concerned. He finally
spoke.

>"My people have sent me to analyse this situation and I
believe
your aims are truthful. If you are prepared to do so we
can

>travel to our outpost where you can meet the Mandalorian
Ruling
Council."

>The princess smiled. "Thank you. But I'm afraid we can't
leave
just yet. I have to wait for my father's arrival. No doubt
he

>will not be long."
"Of course," Keylar replied. "Then tomorrow we
shall leave for

>Yarori."

>* * * * *

>Anakin finally came to. He raised his head and looked around.
He
was on the surface of Chakran. Near the old mining colony.

>The sensors on his X-wing, perhaps the only system still
remotely

functional informed him of the poisonous atmosphere.

>He pulled out a gas mask and goggles and lifted the top hatch
to climb out into the not so fresh air.

>
As he jumped out he noticed a blaster pointing at his head.

>He turned to see a red haired woman with similar facial
attire to himself. He lifted his hands above his head slowly.

>"What do you want?" he asked.

>He received a blast that whizzed passed his ear as a reply.
As the woman reset her blaster, Anakin pulled out his lightsaber,

>deflecting the next lasor that came towards him. His opponent
threw the gun aside and took out her own, red bladed laser sword.

>The two clashed as Skywalker forced her back.
"Who are you?"

>"It is not your concern," she replied, taking a swipe at his
head which he avoided easily with a quick step to the right. He

>hit her back and she rolled with the attack, somersaulting to
safety. She picked her blaster up again and gave of several

>random shots which Anakin was forced to deflect. This gave her
the opportunity to rush forward, blade held out. It went through

>his side as if it were paper. He grabbed it in pain but then
realised what he must do to win. He began to focus, keeping his

>mind on the here and now, letting the Force control his movement...

>Anakin jumped into the air and came down with a crash, knocking
the woman's lightsaber out of her hand and well out of her reach.

>She cursed him under her breath as he smiled. "Now, I think you
have a few questions to answer, don't you?"

>"I'll tell you nothing, Jedi," she hissed. "It isn't you I'm
after, but when we meet again you'll remember the name Mara

>Jade as the person who killed your daughter and you could do
nothing about it."

>
Skywalker came to his senses. He had to find Leia as fast as he

>could. With a quick manipulation of the Force he sent Mara's
weapon far into the distance before leaving her standing in the

>red, crater-filled area.

>* * * * *

>Leia entered her quarters and activated the lights. She realised
she was not alone. Luke's spirit was with her again.

"Twice in as

>many days. I feel honoured," she smiled.
"I'm afraid I have grave news..." he said solemnly.

>"Father!" Leia's eyes were filled with fear.
Her brother shook his head. "No. He is fine. He is a Jedi Master

>who can take care of himself. When the time comes he will not be
the target." He stopped so that Leia could recover from her unfounded

>shock. "You, my sister, are the greatest power in the Republic, in
the galaxy. When the darkness arrives I will not be able to help

>you, not in this form..."

>As he finished his sentence, the doors burst open with a bang
as
five men and droids stormed into the room, blaster rifles at
the
>ready. The lead one looked at the princess Jedi and smiled.
"Ah,
I see you're waiting for us..."
>"Bounty hunters..." Leia frowned as they opened fire on her.

> TO BE CONTINUED....

3. Defiance

Title: Republic Saga - Vengeance, Chapter Three

>
Author: Jonathan Evans

>
Author email: noggins@ic24.net

>
Summary: Plans are made on both fronts as Anakin and Leia
arrange to meet the Mandalorian High Council and Emperor Thrawn
discovers betrayal in his ranks...

>
Disclaimer: George Lucas owns everything and I'm not making any
money off of this nor do I intend to (I'd like to but that's not the
point). You can distribute this freely provided that it's complete
with this disclaimer and give the writer credit where credit's due.

>
REPUBLIC SAGA

>VENGEANCE
CHAPTER THREE

>
The first blast caught Leia by surprise but she managed to avoid

>it with a leap into the air. She swung on the light placement,
kicking
the first bounty hunter to the ground. She dived behind
the sofa,

>using it as a barricade as the other four took random shots at
her.
She moved her hand under her cloak and pulled out her
lightsaber, the

>red blade extending with a loud buzz. The Jedi robes fell to
the
floor to allow her to move easily.

>
Two blasts came towards her head but they were deflected with

>ease, one going back and hitting its firer in the chest the
other
creating a small hole in the wall. Leia held out her arm and
two of

>the mercenaries fell backwards onto each other. The princess
Jedi
smiled. "You really should give up. It's not going to get you
anywhere."

>
As she spoke those words a loud crashing sound came from above
as

>two heavily build reptilian creatures burst through the
ceiling.
Leia jumped out of the way to avoid a piece of falling
rubble. She

>came down on her feet but was lifted into the air by the
strong,
grey skinned thing. With a quick movement of her wrist,
its arm

>sliced off and the shoulder and fell to the floor with a thud.

>The remaining bounty hunters had got their senses together by
this
point and had their weapons trained on her as she backed
slowly

>into a corner. She may have been a Jedi but she was
overwhelmed
by the numbers. The large creature with the missing
arm was still

>fully functional. The only thing she had done was to make it
even
angrier.

>
With one final strike, Leia ran at one of the creatures in an

>attempt to take it out of the battle but misjudged her
opponent
and was send flying through the air, he saber rolling to
the

>floor on the other side of the room.

>The lead bounty hunter, a scarred human with a cloth around
his
head held his gun at the princess' head and grinned. "I've

>always wanted to kill a Jedi," he said. "I was beginning to
worry
I'd never get the chance..." Leia sensed the pleasure

>flowing through him as his finger pulled down on the trigger.
A
quick spasm went through his body as he fell to the ground.

>Everyone turned to see the masked visage of the man they knew
as
Boba Fett.

>"What you boys doin' here?" he asked them calmly.
"Fett!" a
short, dark grey droid exclaimed in its electronically

>produced voice. "We thought you were dead."
"You thought wrong,
droid," was the reply. "This here's my

>target. Ain't no one gonna take that away from me..."
"This was a
free bounty. Our benefactor said it was up to anyone

>to bring her in. Dead or alive."
"Anyone? Last I heard she was
wanted alive and I was the one to

>do it."

>A tall, green skinned Trandoshan Fett knew as Bossk looked
down
on him, trying to instill fear in the heart of his rival.

"What

>are you going to do to stop us? You're old, weak. You have
no
power. People aren't afraid of you as they used to be."

>Fett looked up, standing as tall as he could and looking
as
deeply into the alien's eyes as he could. "Do you want to try

>me out?"

>There was silence. Everyone looked at their fellow bounty
hunter
in the Mandalorian armour. He looked back at each

>and every one of them without moving his head. "I will
kill
anyone who gets in my way. You know I will."

>4-LOM looked down at the body of Dengar before turning to
the
others. "I think we should, uh, leave him to it..."

>Bossk and the others nodded. He looked at Fett as he made his
way
to the exit. "We'll meet again, Fett. And you will die."

>"Sure..."

>The door closed behind them. Anakin, still with his armour
on
looked at the two grey-skinned aliens who stood watching what

>they considered to be a bizzare interchange. "Greeting,
Noghri,"
Anakin said. "I am Boba Fett. I'm sure you've heard of
me."

>"We have. We are not afraid like those lower lifeforms."
"Maybe
you should be."

>
The Noghri with the missing arm jumped at Anakin who pulled
>a rounded blade from a holster on his back. He threw it at
his
enemy and hit in in the chest. It fell to the floor, dead

>upon impact as his heart was pierced. "Want to try
anything
else?" The second of the two aliens pulled out a blaster
and

>shot the weapon out of Anakin's hand. He rolled along the
floor
to avoid further hits as he took a blaster from his belt.

His

>first shot missed as he regained his balance and the
second
scoring a hit in the Noghri's shoulder but doing no harm.
He
>tried again but the recoil was jammed. He tugged at the back
as
hard as he could and pulled his pistol up to fire again
>only to see the creature falling into two pieces thanks to
his
daughter's lightsaber.
>
"Good work," he commented. "But I could have dealt with him."

>"Hmmm..."
"Really."
>"Is it just me or are you a little reckless for a Jedi
Master?"
"Yoda used to think I was too reckless to be an padawan!"

>"Maybe he was right," Leia smiled. After several seconds her
face
became serious again. "But what I want to know is who
>sent them here?"
"Perhaps the same person who sent a Sith
apprentice to attack
>me once I arrived on this planet..."
"A Sith? Like Vader?"

>"No. Not that strong, but given training under a powerful
enough
master she could have been..."
>
At that moment the door opened again. Anakin and Leia turned to

>see Keylar watching them. Rage filled his body as he seemd
to
recognise the man the princess was with.
>"You...." he hissed and pulled out a Mandalorian blade and
diving
at Anakin with it held above his head.

>
* * * * *

>
Mara Jade walked through the doors from the docking ring to

>the starport itself. She looked around carefully around to
check
for traces of her prey. An empty table stood before
>her with two glasses that once held drinks. Mara picked up
the
first and sniffed it. Juri Juice. Alcoholic, no Jedi
>would drink that. The same for the second. She continued
to
another empty one but a large alien slumped down on the
>seat before she could get there.

>"Hey, there pretty one," he smiled when he noticed her.
"You
wanna sit her? There's room on my lap."

>Within seconds his head had collided with the wall on the
other
side of the room. Mara examined the cup that had not yet
been

>cleaned away. Blue milk, not the sort of drink your
average
smugler or spacer would consume. Only a Jedi could have
been

>here. He picked it up and sensed Leia's presence. She had
been
here only several hours before.

>
A group of three suspicious looking beings of various races

>were coming her way. They kept looking back over their
shoulders
obviously worried that someone or something was
>after them. Mara walked in front of them. "Hey!" the first
one
shouted. "Get outta the way."

>"Not until you tell me what you're doing," the young
woman
hissed.

>"It's none of your..." The first of the aliens
suddenly
recognised her. "You - You work for the Emperor, don't
ya?"

>"I've been known to," Mara replied coldly as she noticed
the fear
growing in their eyes.

>"Look, we - we tried to kill her... but Fett got in our way.
Said our orders had changed."

>"You were told to kill her?"
"The Emperor himself s-said so."

>"Did he?" Mara thought everything over. Thrawn said he wanted
to take his time in taking over the Republic. He knew she had

>to kill Leia Skywalker to fulfil her orders from Palpatine
himself. If he did it for her she would have to keep working

>for him. Anger filled Mara's entire body. "Come with me. You
have new commands."

>
The bounty hunters followed Mara into an alleyway just far

>enough away from any prying eyes. "So, what do we do now?"
the first one, Bossk, asked.

>"And what's the pay like?" Zuckuss continued.
"Oh, you may not like the pay," replied Mara as she pulled

>out a blaster, taking all three of them by surprise. She
looked down on their smoking bodies with a grimace. It was

>time she severed her links with Thrawn and did the real
emperor's bidding.

>
* * * * *

>
Anakin side stepped out of the way of Keylar, sensing the

>exact time he would come down. The Mandalore got to his feet
and tried again but once more the attack was counteracted.

>"You are scum Boba Fett! You are the nemesis of all the Mandalore!"
He swiped again and Anakin ducked, this time grabbing the blade

>in between both of his hands and pulling it out of his enemy's
grasp.

>"This isn't the way to go, ambassador!" he said.
"How do you know who I am? All that we Mandalore were to you

>were targets for your sick games..."
"I am..." Anakin ducked a punch that Keylar threw at him and

>blocked another. "...not who you think I am."
"Really? Who are you?"

>
Anakin took the helmet off to reveal his true face. Keylar

>looked at him carefully. "Skywalker?" Anakin nodded. "Why do
you wear the armour of such an evil creature?"

>"Because... because I used to be Boba Fett." He waited for the
next attack but it didn't come. He continued his explanation.

>"It was a time of war. I had no choice but to do what I did.
It was the only way to protect the future of the Republic without

>them knowing who I was. If they did I would have been a target
for the Empire..."

>"And that is in the past now?"
"Of course. It is time we put old conflicts behind us and

>looked toward the future."

>Keylar nodded. "Then we set course for Yarori in five hours.
My ship is on docking platform thirty seven B."

>He left the room as quickly as he had entered it. Leia looked
at her father. "Very good. Now get out of that armour before

>we're shot down the moment we meet the High Council."
Anakin smiled. "I'll meet you before we leave. I'll need to

>arrange my own quarters."

>* * * * *

>Meanwhile, far away from all that was happening, Thrawn
was
sitting in his throne on Coruscant. Several aliens had tried

>to get on his good side, claiming that they had information
on
the Republic bases but he knew they were lying. Not by his

>usual means though. This time he could sense their fears of
being
discovered. His new found abilities shocked him. He had been

>noticing changes within himself since before he became
emperor
but now they were becoming more and more visible. And he
liked
>it.

>A Deveronian came into his room and bowed. "Hello Emperor
man.
Villie is here as you ordered."
>"Vilmargh Gahrk," Thrawn hissed. "Information has come into
my
grasp that someone has betrayed me. I want her eliminated.
>I feel you can do it."
"Ja. Villie not as old as people thinks.
He can do it in
>quick quick time."
"Her name is Mara Jade. She is powerful and in
tune with the
>Force. She could be a danger to you."
"No. Villie has taken out
many Jedi in his past, yes yes. He can
>do it."
"Good," continued Thrawn. "Use any means necessary."

>"Of course. She is to be dead soon."

>Gahrk turned and left the throneroom. Thrawn pondered
his
situation. When he sensed Mara had disobeyed his orders he

>did not want to believe it. He refused to, but the feelings
were
too strong. She had to die no matter how much it hurt him
before
>she did something he would regret himself...

> TO BE CONTINUED....

4. Discoveries

Title: Republic Saga - Vengeance, Chapter Four
>
Author: Jonathan Evans
>
Author email: noggins@ic24.net
>
Summary: Lando makes an amazing discovery about his past while
Mara Jade makes several new enemies....
>
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money off of this nor do I intend to (I'd like to but that's not the
point). You can distribute this freely provided that it's complete
with this disclaimer and give the writer credit where credit's due.

>
REPUBLIC SAGA
>VENGEANCE
CHAPTER FOUR
>
The Republic base on New Naboo was as busy as ever. In the
Military
>room plans were continually being made for the future attack
on
Coruscant, some officers not knowing of the mission to the
Mandalore.
>
Lando Calrissian wandered through the grey durasteel corridors,
each
>one the same as the last with only the occasional number to give
the
sign that you were actually headed somewhere. He seemed drawn
by an

>unknown force, perhaps even THE Force, to the entrance of the Jedi
>Council chambers. He stood by the door, looking at it while emotions
>filled his entire body. He didn't know if it was anger or confusion,
>or maybe even both, but it was powerful. Part of him wanted to walk in
>there and blast the hell out of them all for leaving him in the
>state he now was while the other wanted to demand answers.

>
"Come in..." a voice in his head called out. He walked forward and
>the massive door slid open. The only Council member present was
>Adi Gallia - just the woman he wanted to see right now. He tried
>to remain emotionless as he spoke. "You know why I'm here." She nodded
>in reply. "Then you're going to help me."
>
"No," Gallia responded. "You know of my feelings toward clones. Your
>kind were used to aid in the wiping out of the Jedi. It may have
>been over twenty five years for most of the galaxy but for myself
>and the rest of the survivors it has been barely one.."

>Lando's anger continued to build up as he listened to the Jedi
>Master's words. "You say 'my kind' but I don't know anything

>about that. And I wouldn't have unless you had told. Surely
>*you*
are the one that's made me the threat to you that you claim I am!"
>"You are the most dangerous of all the clones. Your faults made
>you that way."
>"And why is that exactly?" Lando asked.
"When the early experiments began it was intended to create being
>invisible to the Force - without midi-chlorians in their blood.
That way they could strike without us knowing..."
>"But something went wrong when I was..." He couldn't even say
the word. He hated the idea of being artificial and he wasn't
>going to think of himself that way - ever.
"... when you were created, yes," Gallia said finishing his
>sentence. She didn't seem to care what his feelings were.
Lando's hate began to swell as she continued. "The early
>types, it was discovered, were not only visible to the Force
but their abilities were heightened and the possibility of
>falling the the Dark Side greater." She paused. "Surely
>you
didn't think it was skill that made you such a good gambler?"

>
That remark hurt Lando. He had worked hard to be the man he was

>and now she was saying it was the Force that made it possible.
Something suddenly struck him like a jolt of lightening.

>"Did you say that I can use the Force? That I can be a Jedi?"

>After several seconds the Council member nodded. "The Sith
played an important part in the Clone Wars. Emperor Palpatine
>was one himself as you know but by having armies of Force
sensitive warriors who also have free will, another major flaw
>in itself, there was a risk to his status. Only two Sith
>are
allowed at one time - Darth Bane himself stated it - and if

>the clones became more powerful they could potentially
overthrow
him and change his plans..."
>"So he had us scrapped and replaced with drones who may not
have
been as powerful but were not a threat to his leadership.
>Clever bastard."

>Gallia nodded. She did not believe Calrissian would take the
news
as easily as he did and even sensed that he accepted it.
>Maybe he wasn't as bad as she always thought. Maybe he was
the
person he claimed to be - self made gambler and brave Rebel

>general. Perhaps there was no knowledge of his past hidden
deeply
in his subconscious. Adi Gallia was filled with guilt -
>she was the one wrong here, thinking just because he was
created
in a laboratory, he wasn't evil.
>"I am sorry," she said with her head bowed.
"What?"
>"I have been wrong here and I want to make it up to you,"
she
confessed. "You want to discover yourself and I will aid
>you in your quest. Just tell me what you want."
"Well," Lando
smiled. "There is just one thing..."
>
* * * * *
>
The disguised Mandalore vessel lifted from the surface of

>Chakran where it had spent the last day being forced
through
several inspections which it passed with flying colors
much
>to the annoyance of the small group of Imperial troops
that
struggled to maintain control over the smugglers. It had been

>a long hard year for them since the death of the Emperor
along
with the destruction of the Death Star and now freedom was

>returning their iron fist could no longer remain closed.

>Inside the vessel Anakin, Leia and Keylar remained in the
cockpit
until they were sure that they were well away from
>any patrols before relaxing. Anakin took a seat next to
the
ambassador as he inputted the hyperspace co-ordinates. "So,

>how far away is Yarrori?" he asked.
"About two days. We tried to
stay as close to the edge of the
>galaxy as possible. Even Outer Rim planets like Tatooine were
to
close to the centre."
>"That's understandable given your situation," Anakin
replied.
"But what I'd like to know is how you survived the Empire

>once it turned against you."

>Keylar's motions showed this part of his race's history
affected
him personally. "They needed us to get the cloning
>technology from Naboo but with their new army the Empire
only
considered us a threat. Our former allies were now our
>new enemies and they were more powerful than either the Jedi
or
the remnants of the Old Republic - they knew our weaknesses.
>It wasn't long before we could fight no more..."
"And the
Mandalore always fought to the death," Anakin continued,
>knowing exactly what was going through the ambassador's mind.
"To
be losing hurt you. You had to do what your sacred rites
>spoke outwardly against. You ran from battle."
Keylar nodded. "It
was hard for us all but we have returned and
>we will get our revenge."

>While the conversation was happening, Leia had slipped out of
the cockpit into the small space that had been designated her
>own. She sat and called out her brother's name and his
ghostly
image appeared, lighting up the entire room. "What is it
you
>called me for, sister?" he asked.
"I was wondering if you had any
prophecies about what I am
>about to do. You are closer to the Force than anyone I
know
and..."
>"Yes?" Luke replied in a calm, loving voice.
"I miss you," Leia
smiled sadly.
>"I am always with you Leia," he told her.
"Yes, but it's not the
same. I want to see you, be with you."
>
Luke reached out his hand and touches Leia's cheek. Even though

>it wasn't physically there she could feel the warmth
emanating
from him. She looked into his eyes and nodded. "Thank
you. I'm
>so glad you're here in whatever form it may be, but I wish
you
could help us by..."
>"You know that isn't possible. Vader killed me and you avenged
my
death by not giving in to the hatred. By doing that you became

>more of a Jedi than I could ever have been."
"Don't say that!"
she scolded him. "You know that isn't true."
>"Oh, but it is. Through you I will live on - the Jedi will
live
on. I foresee a long future ahead of you."
>"But will it be easy?"
"Is anything ever easy?" he said as he
disappeared into thin air,
>his voice trailing off slowly, flowing through Leia.

>* * * * *

>Meanwhile, another ship passed through the Imperial probes
into
the reaches of space. Mara Jade hacked into the hyperspace
computer
>of the Mandalore vessel and with the co-ordinates locked on,
jumped
to lightspeed just seconds after her intended prey. She
turned to
>the droid at her side. "You take control, I've got something to
do."
The robot nodded and began pressing buttons furiously in
order to
>take over the running of the starship.

>Mara took the short walk to her quarters where she began to
remove
her clothing she wore to get onto the outpost on Chakran
and replaced
>them with a black catsuit which would aid her undercover
infiltration
when they arrived at their destination, wherever that
may be. She
>reattached her belt which contained a small blaster and
more
importantly, her trusty lightsaber - the only weapon that
should
>ever be used when facing Jedi.

>* * * * *

>In the cargo hold of Mara's ship, a shadowy figure emerged
from
the darkness, the large horns protruding from his red skinned

>forehead creating the kind of fear that his race was used to.
The
Devaronian stepped out into the lowly enlightened corridor
>with a grin on his face.
"Villie make sure traitor woman dead
now..." he smiled.
>
* * * * *

>
The Republic archive was filled from floor to ceiling with datapads,
>old fashioned books and even the occasional Jedi Holocron.
Lando
picked one up and examined it closely trying to work out what
>it was and how it was turned on. Without needing to open his
mouth, Gallia took it from him and it burst into light, activated
>by her touch. The green holographic Jedi Master that was projected
from the top addressed them without even looking in their
>direction.
"Many questions arise," it began. "Some are answered while others
>are not. I am Master Vakros Tannin, guardian of the sacred Jedi
Holocron." There was a pause as Lando turned to Gallia who

>motioned for him to continue watching the hologram. "In the
past there were many now there are merely a few. Look to the
>dark planet and you will find what you are looking for..."
>It vanished as quickly as it had appeared while Lando looked to
his companion with a smile on his face. "It coulda been a little
>less vague but I'm guessing it means there's someone else like
me out there... That I have..."
>"...a brother?"
"Yeah," Calrissian said, his smile turning into a large grin.
>"I've got a brother."
>Gallia looked at the ornate blue cube in her hand. "But the
question remains - where is he?"
>"The Dark Planet?" Lando pondered. "Coruscant maybe."
The Jedi shook her head. "I do not believe that is true."
>As far as I know it has never been referred to as that since
it became the head of the Galactic Republic."
>"And that was a long time ago. Maybe we could find it
somewhere in here." He walked over to a pile of datapads and
>picked the first one he saw up. Upon activating it he smiled.
"Planetary names during the reign of the Galactic Republic..."
>Too good to be true maybe?"
"Or perhaps your Force powers emerging?"
>"I doubt that," Lando replied, wanting to put the idea of him
possibly becoming a Jedi behind him. Far behind him. He looked

>over the information that he had collected. "I'll try running
a search for dark planet... Should be a start."
>
Lando smiled as the information he wanted seem to come up

>almost instantly. "Here it is! Nar Shadaa - the Hutt's little
safe haven."
>"Looks like we've got a journey on our hands," the Jedi Master
replied.
>"*We*?" Lando asked. "You're coming along too?"
"Of course. I wish to help you all I can. It is the only way
>I can make it up to you for my doubts."
Calrissian nodded slightly. "Y'know, there's no need for that."
>He paused then quickly resumed what he was saying. "That's not
saying I don't need company. That journey'll probably be pretty
>dull on my own."
Adi smiled back at him as they left the room.

>
* * * * *

>
Elsewhere in a hyperspace corridor heading to Yarori, Mara

>Jade's vessel was carefully following the Mandalore
starship
without being detected. The control droid ensured they
were

>far enough out of sensor range that they could make the
voyage
safely.

>
"Hello droid-being..." a voice said behind it. PQ-8 looked

>around and received a blast in the middle of its head for
its
efforts. Villie pushed the metal carcass aside and looked

>at the computer. "Ah, we are heading for far far planet.
This
interesting," he pondered as he left the cockpit and
>walked into the corridor leading towards the lone crew
quarters.
He pulled the door open with all the strength he
>had and looked inside. The lights were down low so it took
the
Devaronian mercenary several seconds to adjust to the

>darkness.

>He stepped into the room fully and examined it
carefully.
Something was wrong. The door slammed shut behind him
and

>at the same instant a viewscreen activated. Mara's face
was on
it, obviously pre-recorded.

>"Welcome to my starship," she remarked. "I don't know who
you are
but I'm guessing Thrawn sent you. Don't feel too

>bad about being caught - you've done better than most have
just
by getting on board. The vessel is set to self destruct

>in several seconds. You may be dying but think of it this
way:
you'll make a great message back to the Emperor. Bye!"

>
The screen turned off and panic filled Villie's eyes. He ran

>back to the door but couldn't open it. Magnetically sealed!
He
bashed on it as hard as he could but to no avail...

>
* * * * *

>
The single escape pod shot from the bottom of the starship

>just as it burst into a supernova, creating a spectacular
heavenly
display. Mara looked back at it, knowing if things went
wrong

>now she was trapped. She straightened herself out. There was
no
time for doubting her own abilities - she could do this and

>she was going to. No matter how hard Leia Skywalker pleaded
for
her life. The red haired woman smiled.

>
* * * * *

>
On Coruscant a blinding vision filled Thrawn's head. He

>clawed at his hair until the pain died away. His aides
looked at
him and were obviously concerned - for their

>own lives. If the Emperor wanted to take his anger out
on anyone
right now it would be them. Their worry was

>sated when Thrawn motioned for them to leave him alone,
a task
which they did at a speed they never thought they

>would be able to reach in their entire lives.

>The Emperor finally looked up with a frown on his face.
This had
proved it to him - he was now able to use the

>Force, a gift he knew nothing about the origin of but
it was

beginning to serve him well even if it caused
>him pain. He pressed a button on the arm rest of his
throne and
the holographic image of an Imperial officer
>appeared.

>"My Lord," he said. "You have called me?"
"Yes," Thrawn hissed.
"I want you to prepare for an attack
>on the outer galaxy planet of Yarori. Mobilise all troops
and
expect heavy casualties."
>"Sir, are you... sure?"
"I am sure. I want this threat wiped off
the face of
>the galaxy forever."

>The officer nodded and the link ended. Thrawn sat back
into the
throne, the large, ornate bones that created massive
>spikes above him causing a shadow to fall over his eyes.
He
frowned. "This time things will be different."
>
 TO BE CONTINUED.....
>
AUTHOR'S NOTE: Having started the Republic Saga I am planning to
begin a web site that will not only archive the main chapters
(starting with 'Revenge of the Jedi' and going through 'Vengeance'
and beyond...) but also act as an encyclopedia and more of this
alternate universe saga. I'm asking anyone who is interested in
taking part - be that in web design, photo manipulation (to create
images of the new characters as well as altered versions of the more
well known ones) and writing (to work on prequels, background stories
and other things). To find out more or if you want to help out, mail
me at noggins@ic24.net
>
The site is currently located at:

><http://angelfire.com/scifi/republicsaga>

5. Forces Rising

Title: Republic Saga - Vengeance, Chapter Five
>
Author: Jonathan Evans
>
Author email: noggins@ic24.net
>
Summary: Mara and Leia come head to head in a clash of forces
while Lando and Adi Gallia travel to Nar Shaddar
>
Disclaimer: George Lucas owns everything and I'm not making any
money off of this nor do I intend to (I'd like to but that's not the
point). You can distribute this freely provided that it's complete
with this disclaimer and give the writer credit where credit's due.

>
REPUBLIC SAGA
>VENGEANCE
CHAPTER FIVE
>
Yarori was a desolate world, laid to waste during conflicts long

>before the formation of the Old Republic. It made a perfect
hide-out
for the Mandalore who had been hiding away from the
Empire's grip
>since the Clone Wars decades earlier. Their base was located in
a
dull grey mountain range where it could not be seen unless you

>were close enough to it that the guards could blast you away.
It
proved effective for hiding, but that was not what the
Mandalore
>were designed for.

>The vessel of similar design to much of the buildings landed on
an
outcropping which had carefully carved steps down to the main

>entrance. Leia and Anakin Skywalker were the first to leave,
closely
followed by Ambassador Keylar. Their cloaks were pulled
down over

>their faces as a sign of reverence towards the race they were
about
to meet - or at least that was what Anakin told his
daughter.

>
The meeting party stood forward. "Welcome back ambassador," the

>first said as he shook Keylar's hand roughly. "It has been a
long
wait but we hope there is good news."

>"The Republic are willing to accept us into their ranks," he
replied.
"Good, but we must first deal with the High Council. They
are still

>against any relations with them."

>Anakin stood forward and addressed them. "I was to believe
that
they had already agreed to join us..."

>The leader of the small group nodded sadly. "Yes, so did we
but
they have recently retracted due to the growth of the Empire
that

>has been discovered."
"Surely then they should strike before it
continues!"

>"I wish they thought the same way as you, Jedi." He stopped for
a
moment. "However we can deal with that in time. Come, we have
prepared

>living quarters for you. I'm sure you would like to get
comfortable
before we begin the meetings."

>
Leia nodded and they followed the Mandalore down the steps into
the

>surprisingly high-tech military base. Once they were out of
sight
the escape pod that had attached to them during the trip
through

>hyperspace opened up and Mara Jade stepped out, shaken by
the
journey but nonetheless prepared for battle. She watched as
the Jedi

>and Mandalore disappeared from sight and smiled. "Soon..." she
hissed.

>* * * * *

>Adi Gallia waited for Lando to enter the cockpit of the
Republic
Cruiser. Once he appeared she smiled, "we're nearly at
Nar Shadaa,"

>she informed him. "I hope you've got the supplies ready."
"Of
course," Calrissian replied. "Blasters, thermal detonators..."

>anything else?"
"Did you bring the lightsaber I suggested you
did?"

>He shook his head as he sat down. "I know its a great honour
to
become a Jedi but I don't think its for me. Now, I don't want
you

>to take this the wrong way - I love the Jedi - they're great
for
the Republic, but I just can't be one. I'm too old for a
start..."

>
Gallia took this as quite a shock. "You know we've changed the

>Code to accept older trainees. It's the only way we can
replenish
our numbers."

>"But it's not just that," Lando replied. "It's just not what
I
want with my life. I mean, that's exactly what it is - a life
and

>that ain't something I'm willing to give up just yet,

y'know."
The Jedi Master nodded acceptingly. "It's just I've never

seen

>anyone who did not want to begin the training."
"First time for everything," he grinned as he brought the cruiser out of lightspeed into realspace.

>The planet of Nal Hutta was in the distance and in orbit, Nar
Shadaa - the smuggler's moon. The dirt and grime could even be

>seen from space, the influence of the Hutt's playing an important
part in its appearance to the rest of the galaxy.

>
Passing the security fields was easy with the aid of Jedi mind

>tricks - something which Lando was forced to admit would be pretty
useful given the opportunity. They came to rest in a spaceport

>where they hoped to remain inconspicuous.

>Upon exiting they looked around but there seemed to no one here.
"Something important must be happening," Gallia noted. "I sense

>great anxiety nearby."
"You can actually do that? Sense what people are feeling?" Lando

>asked. "Man, what have I turned down."
"You can still change your mind..."

>"It was a joke, baby," he replied. "I guess that's just the way
I am." He smiled back, something which the Jedi noticed he had

>been doing a lot of recently, for obvious reasons. It isn't every
day you find you have a brother you never you knew you had.

>
They stepped into a cantina where everyone who was anyone seemed

>to be packed. Lando tried to lift himself to see what was happening
but he was too short. "What's goin' on back there?" he asked his

>companion. She closed her eyes and used the Force to examine the
entire room. "There is a Hutt there. He is gambling... playing a

>card game of some kind..."
"Sabacc?"

>"Yes. That is it." She paused to detect several other things.

"He
is playing against a rival - a Hutt but from another clan. The

>second is using a slave to play the game and is doing rather well."

>A large Horox Ryyder bumped Lando forward. "Hey!" he called out.
The alien looked down at him. "Mi sorri," it replied in broken

>basic. "Game 'eskiting. Rellij Hutt loozin' to humin slave. Viry
fonni."

>"Human you say?" Lando asked getting sudden inspiration. "He look
a little like me?"

>The Ryyder studied him carefully and after several seconds spoke.
"No. He look lot like yu."

>
* * * * *

>
"I don't think you are listening to me, my friend," Leia said

>in reply to what the Mandalore Councilor had said. "What I am
offering is a complete pardon for all of the crimes committed during

>the Clone Wars *and* integration into the Republic."
"That is what I have gaulms against, Senator Skywalker," Councilor

>Frakiw continued. "We believe that an apology is required

from
the Republic for the damage caused to our forces!"

>"Statistically speaking," Keylar interrupted, "we caused
more
damage to the Republic than they did to us. It was the Empire
that
>reduced us to this. That is why we can get avenge the deaths
if
we join them now..."
>
The ambassador stopped short as the attention was turned to him.

>Frakiw looked at him intently as he spoke. "And why are you
for
this Keylar? What benefits would joining the Republic have for
you?"
>"Only what it would the rest of the galaxy."
"Are you sure about
that?"
>"Absolutely. When have I ever, in my entire career, had
ulterior
motives?"
>
Anakin beckoned his daughter to sit down. She complied and he

>whispered in her ear. "I do not believe things are going well.
I
tried to detect their thoughts but it is difficult. All I could

>get was a determination to end this as soon as possible."
"I feel
it also and it worries me. I don't think my current methods
>are working."
The elder Skywalker suddenly smiled. "Then its time
you tried to
>hurt them - hurt them where it affects them most..."
"I'm not
sure what you mean, father," Leia replied.

>"Then let me..."

>Anakin stood up and addressed the crowds. There was a frown on
his
face. "You are cowards. All of you." There was uproar as the
entire

>High Council called for him to be taken away. Skywalker
continued
anyway. "You have betrayed your sacred rites but running
from battle!

>You have made a mockery of all you are supposed to believe in.
Not
only are you weak fools but you are also heretics!" The noise
became

>deafening as he turned back to his daughter. "I did learn
something
from old Palpatine before I realised he was insane - how
to rally the

>troops."
"As long as it doesn't get us both killed, father, I'll
be happy,"

>Leia nodded.

>"Fools! Cowards! And heretics! That is all the Mandalore are! It
is
time you put an end to it and fought back against those who
hurt

>you - fight back against the Empire!"
"You are the fool, Jedi! Do
you wish to die?"

>"If only! You could not do it - the Mandalore are no longer
warriors.
They are large, armoured Ewoks!"

>
Two massive security guards dragged Anakin from the podium in
which

>he stood and out into a corridor. The doors closed behind them.
Leia
looked back to him and then to the crowd. "Think this over!
You know

>how important it is for you... Just accept the Republic and put
the
past behind you." With this she turned and followed the route
in

>which her father had been hauled.

>* * * * *

>Lando and Adi finally clawed their ways to the front of the crowd
much to the anger of the aliens they had to push out of the way
>to do so. When they reached there, everything stuck Lando in one
swoop. There in front of him was a man who looked exactly like

>him except for that he had a full beard, longer hair and dirtier
clothes. He didn't look up, sticking to playing sabacc as if his
>life depended on it. Knowing the Hutts it probably did.
>The clone won yet another round and the Hutt playing alone threw
his cards down in disgust and slithered away swearing in Huttese.
>The victor pulled the credit chips into his playing field but they
were taken away by his master.
>
"We have to do something," Lando whispered to his companion.

>"But I don't feel that our Hutt friend is going to give up his
ticket to fortune easily. And that is not taking into account

>that your 'brother' could be happy here."
"Do you really think he would be?" Calrissian asked. "I wouldn't
>be in his situation - winning all those creds and not being able
to keep them. No, he's not happy."

>"Then what do you suggest?"
>Lando stood forward and looked at the Hutt master. "Looks like
you want a challenge, my friend."
>Rellij glanced at the interloper but didn't seem to be able to
compare his appearance to his slave. "Do you feel you can defeat
>my... player?" he spoke in Huttese.
"I think I could put up a good attempt." He paused. "I bid my
>slave for yours."
"Your slave?"
>Lando motioned to Adi. She stood forward with an annoyed expression
on her face. "You better win," she hissed under her breath.
>
Rellij studied the Jedi carefully. "Pretty... but what makes you

>think she is worth the same as my slave here? He is worth a lot
to me."
>"Yeah, well you've never had a slave like mine. She has certain...
abilities that could win you more than games of sabacc."
>The Hutt realised instantly what Lando meant. He laughed loudly,
his voice booming more than ever. "Then its a bet! Deal!"

>
The cards were shuffled and handed out. Lando tried to get

>the attention of his clone but he didn't look up, not
even interacting while they bided for his life. Both players
>picked up their cards. Lando grinned. Seven of coins, four and seven
of sabers and five of flasks. Not a bad opening hand. The clone
>looked at him. "What you got?" Calrissian asked.
Both put their cards down - smuggler, three of coins, bounty hunter
>and master of flasks. Lando had won with pure sabacc. The memories
of his former victories came flooding back.

>
"Deal," he called as the next set of cards were handed out. Jedi

>Knight, two of staves, seven of staves and two of coins to
his
brother's three of staves, five of staves, six of coins and a
>rancor monster. Pure sabacc against him. Lando quietly
cursed
himself but Adi sensed his agitation and began to worry for
>her own safety in the hands of a Hutt. She may have been able
to
kill him and escape but that was something she didn't want
>to resort to.

>"Deal!" the Hutt shouted and the players were handed their
next
cards. Four of flasks, eight of flasks, ace of staves
>and rancor. Lando grinned. Things couldn't have been better.
This
should even out the score a little. The clone's cards
>showed how right he was - mistress of coins, one of coins,
eight
of sabers and mistress of staves. It was a close one
>but Lando managed to gain a thirteen to twelve victory.

>Disaster struck when Calrissian got a Dark Jedi in his next
hand.
He had to replace it but there was a chance he could get
>a weaker card. He took the risk and threw it onto the
table
before flipping the card at the top into his hand. Master of
>coins. Not bad at all, especially with his four of sabers,
master
of sabers and bounty hunter cards. He was dismayed
>to find himself opposing a commander and seven of sabers, nine
of
staves and ace of flasks.
>
Rellij the Hutt laughed. "One more game, my friend," he said.
>"And your woman will be mine."
"Don't count on it, fat boy" Lando
quipped. "In fact I reckon
>we should up the stakes a little."
"What do you have to offer?"
>"Only myself - the greatest living sabacc player in the
galaxy."
"Ha! You overestimate yourself. It is no deal. You cannot
win
>either way."
"Your mistake," Lando smiled behind the new hand of
cards he
>had been dealt. "Now, last chance to change your mind."
"You
bluff, scoundrel. You cannot beat my slaves hand."
>
The Hutt laughed out loud with his eyes closed. Taking this as
>an opportunity, the clone put a card down and picked up
another
in its place. Lando did the same, replacing his one of
staves
>with an eight of flasks. For the first time the two
players
looked each other in the eyes. The clone gave Lando a
smile
>that only his rivals had seen just before they suffered a
massive
loss. Lando cursed himself. This was not good. He put his
hand
>down with antipathy. Two of flasks, six of sabers, eight
of
flasks and seven of coins. The other hand came down - ten, six
>and nine of coins and... a Dark Lord of the Sith! The Hutt
looked
down at it and almost fainted with shock! "You idiot! Why
did you
>change the card?You lost the bet! "

>"And it looks like I win," Lando replied.
"No!" the Hutt
protested. "We were playing by Corellian Rules!"
>"Strange since the last four games were using Rebel

Alliance
Rules. Dark Lord of the Sith worth minus ten last time I checked."

>"How do you know that?"
"I've played sabacc in every variant possible, my friend... and

>won. Now free your slave to me."

>The Hutt turned in anger and knocked the table over as it moved
off followed closely by his aide. The clone looked at Lando and

>spoke to the first time. "Brother?" he said.

>* * * * *

>Leia walked into her quarters and turned the lights on. It wasn't
as bad as the ones she had on Chakran but nowhere near as tidy as

>those back on New Naboo. After her father's outburst the talks had
been delayed until the next day but she wasn't holding out much hope

>for a positive outcome. She could have done nothing to change this,
in fact Anakin's attempts were probably the only thing that would

>possibly be able to change their views.

>She wanted to sleep, to relax but there was so much stopping her
from being able to do this. She had to stay focused, to meditate

>everything they had to go through. She sensed a presence behind
her. "Luke?" she asked.

>
"Not quite, Leia Organa Skywalker..." a female voice said. The

>princess turned to see Mara Jade holding a blaster to her head.
Leia turned around carefully with her hands raised. "Who are you?"

>"My name is Mara Jade. I worked for Emperor Palaptine, but more
than that - I was his hand. I did his bidding and in return I

>gained an understanding of the Force, power, respect and most
of all fear. All who knew me feared me, princess, and you took

>that away from me. For that you will die."

>With a quick nudge of the Force, the blaster flew from Mara's
hand as Leia pulled out her lightsaber and ignited the red

>blade. Mara pulled out her own and they clashed with a loud
buzz. They began to battle as Mara parried every blow that Leia

>offered and gave back the same in return.

>They were equally matched. Leia, although not having received
as much training as her opponent, had the Skywalker reflexes

>and abilities while Mara's experience in the Force was enough
to fight back, but she only had what Palpatine had allowed her

>in his lifetime and now, with his death, they were weakening
slowly.

>
Mara attacked again, slicing down towards Leia's head but she

>lifted her laser sword and blocked it just before her skull
was split in two. She pushed her opponent back into a wall but

>was unable to keep her there as she was kicked backwards. With
a motion of the wrist Mara threw the Jedi to the floor and pounced

>on top of her before she could get back to her feet.

>"Not bad for an apprentice," she smiled.
"It's further than you ever got," Leia replied.

>"I never needed grading, princess. I was too good for

that."
"Somehow I doubt that." The Skywalker woman pushed Mara off

her

>and got to her feet with a backwards flip. "You don't have the
strength."

>"And what strength do you have? Only enough to destroy a weakened
old man!"

>"Palpatine was far from a weak old man. Plus I have fought Darth
Vader and I live to tell the tale."

>"Vader? I am impressed."

>The two women backed off, ready to attack at any moment.

Leia
finally lowered her lightsaber and extinguished the blade.

"That

>was a foolish thing to do, Skywalker," Mara hissed. "I could kill
you where you stand."

>"No you couldn't, and you know it. I can ignite my saber before
you could even move forward. I sense your every feeling."

>"And I yours."
"Then we've reached a stalemate..."

>"For now," Mara replied. "But when we next meet things will be so
different." She turned her saber off and disappeared as quickly

>as she had arrived. Leia breathed a sigh of relief. Her gambit
worked out. There was a twisted sense of honour about Mara which

>she knew would win her over.

>She looked up and Anakin was waiting for her. He face showed the
news he had to offer was not good. "The High Council had denied

>our request. Ambassador Keylar has tried his best but was unable
to convince them otherwise. It seems we're to go back to New

>Naboo empty handed."
"I suppose it was to be expected. I must admit I wasn't hopeful

>as soon as the greeting party told us they'd been reconsidering
even before we'd arrived."

>"They are ready to bid us farewell when you're ready."
"I'll prepare my things now..."

>
* * * * *

>
"We're gonna show you the delights the galaxy has to offer, my friend,"

>Lando said, looking at the stars from the viewscreen of their ship.
"Sure, sabacc is one of them but believe me there's more, far more."

>"Really?" his brother replied.
"Sure. The Republic has restored freedom to the galaxy and now

>you can do what you want, when you want. Once the Empire is out of
the way completely of course."

>
They entered hyperspace with a bang. The man jumped as if he had

>never experience this before. "It's okay," Adi Gallia told him.

"We
just made the jump to lightspeed. We're taking you home."

>He nodded as a smile came to his face. "So," he asked Lando.

"We're
exactly the same physically?"

>"Sure. And by the looks of it our brains work the same way too.
I was doomed if you hadn't swapped that card."

>"I didn't need to look at you to realise the connection between us.
I had to do all I could to come with you. All I can say is, I'm

>lucky you had the hand you did." There was a pause. "Have you actually
won things for yourself playing sabaac?"

>"You bet, credits, starships, hell even a tibanna gas mine!"
"Wow."
>"You can see it next chance we get. I haven't paid a visit there in
quite a while so I'd be needed at some point soon." He put his

>arm around his brother. "Face it, things are looking up for us
both!"
>
* * * * *
>
Anakin shook hands with Ambassador Keylar. "I'm so sorry I wasn't
>able to help you," the Mandalore said sadly. "I suppose you will
now have to stop the attack on Coruscant?"
>"No," Leia frowned in reply. "They are insistant on it going forward
but now our chances of succeeding are small. It is we who must be
>sorry for not being able to bring your people from this self-
induced seclusion."
>
Anakin boarded the ship they had been given for the journey home and
>prepared the engines for take off. Smoke began to fill the air as it
powered up. Leia bid the group farewell and walked on board.

>
"I'm starting to worry about what's going to happen now," Anakin said,
>breaking the silence as they left the surface of the planet.
"The
Council will not help us in our attempts to win the Senate over. They
>left it up to us and..."
"We blew it!" Leia continued. She hit the edge of the computer console.
>"Why were they so difficult? They need our help as much as we need
theirs."
>"Races like the Mandalore are complicated to understand my daughter.
Their days of warfare are over - they'll probably become a colony
>of farmers."
"That wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for this war."

>
As the Mandalore starship lifted through the upper atmosphere a light
>on the computer began to flish wildly. Anakin checked the read-out
screen. "Sensors detect a group of vessels near our location! They're
>waiting for us."
"How many?"
>"At the last count nineteen... no! It's twenty now."
"What type?"

>"Imperial. Star Destroyers!"
>Leia looked out of the viewscreen as the fleet came into view. She
shook her head. "I have a really bad feeling about this..."

>
 TO BE CONTINUED.....

6. Battle Stations

Title: Republic Saga - Vengeance, Chapter Six

>
Author: Jonathan Evans

>
Author email: noggins@ic24.net

>
Summary: Mara realises she must fulfill Palpatine's last wishes or it will kill her - but that means Leia must die...

>
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money off of this nor do I intend to (I'd like to but that's not the point). You can distribute this freely provided that it's complete with this disclaimer and give the writer credit where credit's due.

>
REPUBLIC SAGA

>VENGEANCE
CHAPTER SIX

>
The command ship of the Imperial fleet waited to issue the order

>to attack Yarori. It orbited the planet just ahead of the other
Star Destroyers with its weapons focused on the Mandalore planet.

>Inside, Emperor Thrawn spoke with the holographic image of Mara
Jade.

>"You used me, Thrawn," she said angrily. "I do not wish to continue
our agreement. I'm sure you appreciate that..."

>The Chiss eyed her carefully. "You know that is not possible. It
is you who betrayed me, if you remember, in destroying those bounty

>hunters."
"How did you..."

>"I know," Thrawn interrupted. "I should kill you now, but I don't.
Because you are of some use to me. You will destroy Leia Skywalker

>because it will kill you if you do not obey Palpatine's last
orders but until you do that you will follow me..."

>
Mara lowered her head. She knew it was true - her life depended

>on the programming she received from the last, the real Emperor.
If she did not do as Thrawn commanded no doubt she could be hunted

>down by the Empire before she could fulfil her destiny. "Once more,
my Emperor, just once more..."

>
The hologram flickered away. Thrawn looked up to one of his officers

>who was looking at his computer read-outs with more intensity than
the others. Thrawn was able to sense his emotions easily and

>smiled. "What is it?"

>The officer looked up, obviously shocked by this order. He moved
his eyes around the room before realising the emperor was talking

>to him. "There's an, uh, Mandalore designed vessel coming from
the atmosphere of Yarori. It doesn't seem to be preparing for attack."

>"Destroy it," Thrawn commanded as he gripped the arms of his custom
made throne.

>
* * * * *

>
Deflector shields up!" Anakin called out to his daughter as the first

>barrage of laser fire hit them. She quickly did as commanded, saving
them from further hull damage. "How did they find this place?" Leia

>asked. "The Mandalore had kept it hidden for so long!"
"I agree," Anakin replied. "This is too much of a coincidence."

>"It has to be something with that woman I fought, Mara Jade... she
said she worked for Palpatine but I'd have thought she'd try to

>keep away from the Empire after his death..."

>Her father turned to her. "You encountered her too?"
She nodded. "She was filled with anger. It made her strong."

>"I experienced that in my younger days. I used my emotions in battle
too many times. It nearly drove me to the Dark Side."

Another blast

>hit them hard. "Open fire. I'll pilot us towards the command ship,
you try to take out the shielder generators!"

>"Yes, father!"

>The vessel moved closer to the Imperial Star Destroyer, avoiding
as much damage as possible coming from all surrounding starships.

>Leia locked the blaster cannons on the generators.

"Firing...
now!" The yellow streaks hit the first of the two massive

>globes but only resulted in minor surface hits.
"I'm taking us around for another shot!" Anakin called out.

>"It's too late," his daughter replied. "We won't survive another
run on them..."

>
Their shields went down with a hum which slowly became silence.

>"Oh no," Leia groaned.
"Be calm," her father replied. "The Force will guide us through

>this."
The barrage finally stopped. The two Jedi looked at each other

>carefully. A light on one of the console began to blink and an
alarm chimed.

>"A troop carrier is joining with us. We're about to be boarded!"

>Anakin stood up and ignited his lightsaber. Leia did the same and
they left the cockpit and entered the main section of the vessel

>as Stormtroopers poured out from a hole blasted into the side.
The first three were hacked in half by the laser swords of the

>Jedi. The rest moved back and began firing.

>"Get to an escape pod!" Anakin ordered as he deflected several
blasts back on the Imperial troops. Leia moved swiftly through the

>short corridors, ducking laserfire. She glanced back over her
shoulder to see Anakin brushing them aside with a slight movement

>of his wrist. Obviously his strong Force powers were returning.

>Leia waited at the doorway to the pod. Anakin ran down to her.
"We could beat them but then we'd be a target to the Star Destroyers

>again. I should be able to use the Force to guide us back to the
planet," he told her as he turned off the magnetic seal to the

>door. They got in and closed it just as the Stormtroopers got
to their senses and came bounding after them.

>
With the press of a button they were launched into space and away

>from the Mandalore starship. Anakin closed his eyes as he moved
the pod away from the laser blasts with a perception only the

>Force could give him. Leia began to realise how he was the Chosen
One as it was claimed. She looked out of the window to see a

>Star Destroyer firing at them. It was on a direct course.

The
princess closed her eyes tightly as they suddenly moved out of

>its range. She breathed a sigh of relief. There was still a long

way to go though.
>
* * * * *
>
Thrawn suddenly felt something. He turned to the weapons officer.
>"Fire three blasts. One directly at them and two to either side.
Make sure it is as close as possible. There should be no margin
>for error."
"Yes, my lord."
>
The Imperial Cruiser fired again. The escape pod moved to avoid

>the blast coming towards it but collided with one at its side.
Thrawn smiled. "The Force is not everything, Skywalker," he

>said, half to himself. "As I shall prove."

>* * * * *

>Anakin lost his concentration on impact. He opened his eyes and
looked around. "There was nothing I could do," he told his daughter.
>"I know," she replied. "I sensed a disturbance in the Force. I'm
not sure what it was but..."
>"I felt it also. I'm not sure how it could have come about, but..."

>There was a quiet hissing sound around them. Leia stopped talking and
knelt down to inspect where it was coming from. She frowned.
"Air
>is leaking out. I'd give us another forty seconds before there isn't
enough for us to survive."
>"Then we must conserve it..." Anakin took one last breath and slipped
into a trance-like state. His pulse slowed and his life signs decreased.
>Leia began to worry. She didn't think she could perform this technique
at her level of training. She tried to mimic her father but soon
>the lack of air made it impossible. She grasped her throat as she
began to choke. Anakin suddenly realised what was happening.
"Leia!
>Concentrate..."
"It's... too... late..."
>
A loud bang surrounded them. Anakin looked out of the window to see
>a set of blast doors closing behind them. They had been taken
into a vessel. He opened the door to the pod with the Force and
>looked in shock as he saw Mara Jade waiting for him.
"Hello, Skywalker," she hissed as she clasped eyes on him. "It's
>been too long."
"What are you doing here?" he asked.
>"It is my starship... well, it is now I've borrowed it from the
Mandalore."
>
He stepped out, hand on lightsaber, glancing back at Leia who had
>passed out on the floor of the pod. A shuttle pod was also in the bay,
ready for take-off if things went wrong. While he wasn't concentrating
>His weapon flew from his hand into Mara's. "We don't want you using that,
do we?" she smiled.
>"You know I could defeat you without that," he informed her.
"The Force is my guide."
>"Then you will become lost when..." Mara walked over to Leia and
pulled her out of the pod. She held a blaster to her head.
"...you

>daughter is dead. I reckon I could pull this trigger faster
than
you could take it from my hands."
>
Mara dragged Leia's unconscious body out of the docking bay and
>towards a door. "Get in there," she ordered Anakin. He took
one
look at Leia and stepped in grudgingly. "Bind yourself."
>He saw two sets of binders on the floor. He touched the first
and
realised it was made out of cortosis ore which deactivated

>lightsabers upon impact. He tied up his ankles then his
wrists.
they locked automatically. "You know I can get out of
these once
>you've gone," he said calmly.
"That's why I got this little
beauty to make sure you don't try
>it..." Mara opened a case in the cell and an example of the
familiar
yellow lizard, the ysylamiri could be seen. Anakin
suddenly felt
>blinded to the Force. "He'll be keeping you company until I
have
finished with Princess Skywalker here. Don't do anything I

>wouldn't."

>Mara closed the door behind her as she left. Leia was
beginning
to come to as the other woman lifted her up to eye
level. "I'm
>glad you're awake now. I would have made it painful for you
if
you hadn't come to by the time we got to the bridge."

>"Why... are you doing this?"
"You humiliated me in front of the
entire Empire when you
>destroyed my master. Now it is time for you to suffer the
same."
"My father...?"
>"He is taken care of. He is quite alive. Now, come with me."

>Leia managed to stand safely and pulled her arm away from
Mara
forcefully. "I think I can do this myself." she replied.

>"Walking to your execution. How brave of you."
"Who said anything
about an execution?"
>The two women walked to the bridge, Leia in front with a
blaster
trained on her back. She knew Mara wouldn't pull the
trigger.
>She sensed something unusual in her emotions but couldn't
quite
put her finger on what it was. In the short time she had

>know this assassin Leia had realised there was something
tormenting
her... something more than the death of Palpatine..."

>
* * * * *

>
Lando walked down the corridor in the Republic base on New Naboo

>alongside the man who he now called his brother. Several
Republic
officials looked in shock at the similarity between them.
They
>continued their conversation, ignoring the glances they were
being
given.
>"So you've been in slavery as long as you remember?" Lando
asked.
"Yeah, I guess so. All my life," the other clone replied.
"I just
>thought that was all there was - some people were meant to be
masters
and others slaves."

>"Man, that's bad. If I'd known I would have been there so much
sooner..."

>"But you didn't. You probably wouldn't have known either if it
wasn't for Master Gallia."

>"Yeah," Lando smiled. "She ain't bad for a Jedi. She helped me
find you."

>
They came to a doorway leading to Mon Mothma's office. It opened

>to reveal the Chancellor at her desk. She smiled, obviously happy
to see the two Calrissians. "Welcome," she began. "We are here to

>discuss your position in the Republic..."
"I, uh, guess so," Lando's brother responded. "Don't mind if I

>act a little... off at times. I've spent my entire life unaware
of either of Empire or the Republic."

>"Of course," Mothma said. "But do either of you know how you
escaped the destruction of all the other clones of your type?"

>They both shook their heads. "I guess someone felt sorry for
us and took us away before we could have been killed. Whoever

>that was I'd love to thank them."
"I'd reckon they were killed by Palpatine as soon as he found out."

>"*If* he found out!"

>Mon Mothma looked at the other Calrissian. "I believe you could
play an important part in the Republic. I hope your brother will

>be able to help you with this... uh, I don't believe I have been
given your name."

>Lando looked at his brother. The latter finally spoke. "Actually,
I don't have a name..."

>
* * * * *

>
On the bridge of the stolen starship, Mara Jade opened a comm-link

>with Thrawn's Star Destroyer. The holographic image of the self
proclaimed Emperor stood before her. "Ah, I see you have captured

>your prey," he said, his hands crossed together in concentration.
"No doubt this is a show of force towards me to prove you no longer

>have to work for the Empire."
"Something like that," Mara replied. She turned to Leia and as

>she pushed her in front of Thrawn whispered "play along," to her.
Leia fell onto her knees in front of the blue flickering image

>of the leader of the Imperial forces.

>Mara took a tube out of a pocket on her belt and showed it to
Thrawn. "This is xeltron breil. I'm sure you know the details.

>Harmless to the wearer but deadly to the victim. It paralyses
the entire bodily functions within seconds of entering the system.

>First the heart stops working, then the brain. I used it during
assassination attempts for Palpatine. It worked effectively then

>and no doubt it will now."

>Thrawn frowned. "And what do you intend to do with it? Use it on
Skywalker?"

>"Of course. She has embarrassed me before the first Emperor now
I will humiliate her before you." Mara applied the liquid from

>the tube to her lips and pulled Leia up to eye level. "Look

at
you. Pathetic. You can't even fight back..."

>
Thrawn smiled. He knew what Mara was about to do. She moved into

>Leia, kissing her hard and, seemingly against her will, passionately.
She tried to pull away but couldn't eventually
Leia's body fell

>limp and collapsed on the floor. Mara looked up at Thrawn, wiping her
mouth clean. The grin on his face showed that he knew something

>she didn't. After a long pause he finally spoke.
"I don't believe she is dead. Maybe you should do it again."

>"Oh, she's dead," was the reply. She took a shock stick from a
holster and jabbed it into the princess. The electricity moved

>visibly through her body but she didn't move. Mara stopped.

"If
she had been alive she would have reacted to that."

>"Then I believe your work is done. No doubt you never intend to see
me again."

>"That's right."
"Somehow I have a feeling that things aren't going to work out

>as you expect..."
The communication ended and Thrawn disappeared. Leia finally opened

>her eyes and got to her feet. She moved for her lightsaber. "I don't
know what you were trying to do then, but you made a mistake..."

>
Mara shook her head. "You won't need that weapon yet."

>"I thought you wanted me dead. Let's do it here and now. We'll fight
and the stronger will be victorious..."

>"No. When I kill you it will be on my own terms. I wanted Thrawn to
think I had done it so I could escape his grasp. Now I'm free we can

>deal with it in time. For now I let you live - knowing that I will
be coming for you and when I do you won't expect it."

>
She disappeared through the doors leaving Leia watching after her

>with a hand still ready to pull out her lightsaber. She lifted
up her hand and touched her lips. Surely Maraa hadn't used xeltron

>breil on her. If she hadn't been able to slip into a trance both
of them would have been killed by the Empire.

>
Leia rushed down to the docking bay to see the shuttle pod leaving

>via the blast doors. She opened the door to the cell her father was
in. Once inside she couldn't see him - only two open binders and

>the ysylamiri - dead. She turned to see Anakin standing behind her.
"She didn't think I would take that option," he told her. "But it

>was the only way."
"You killed it?"

>"I had to. It wasn't the first time. Many years ago I got severely
reprimanded for doing the same thing on a mission with Obi-Wan.

>I have been walking the line between the light and the dark for
a long time, my daughter. It is the only way to bring balance..."

>
Leia didn't have time to discuss this. "We have to get in control

>of this ship. We're on auto-pilot at the moment but I don't think
that'll suffice soon."

>
* * * * *
>
"Get a lock on that vessel," Thrawn ordered, standing up out of

>his throne. He marched across the bridge of the Star
Destroyer
and looked out of the front window. "I want it on board
now."
>He held his white hands behind his back, hidden in the many
folds
of his black robes.
>
"Tractor beam ready. I'm about to get them..." The officer
turned
>back to the emperor with a look of horror on his face.
"They're
out of range. They took control at the last second!"

>"WHAT?!?!?" the pale skinned Chiss exclaimed. "Destroy them!
Destroy
the planet! We have waited too long. Reduce them to
ashes!"
>
The entire fleet of Imperial vessels began to fire on the
surface
>of Yavori as hundreds of TIE Fighters were launched towards
the
starship containing Leia and Anakin...
>
TO BE CONTINUED.....
> <p><p>

7. Consequences

Title: Republic Saga - Vengeance, Chapter Seven

>
Author: Jonathan Evans

>
Author email: noggins@ic24.net

>
Summary: The attack on the Mandalore begins while Leia and Mara
are forced to come to terms with what has happened between them...

>
Disclaimer: George Lucas owns everything and I'm not making any
money off of this nor do I intend to (I'd like to but that's not the
point). You can distribute this freely provided that it's complete
with this disclaimer and give the writer credit where credit's due.

>
AUTHOR'S NOTE: 'Vengeance' will soon be posted at the Republic
Saga website where 'Revenge of the Jedi' is now archived. The offer
is still up for anyone who is interested in taking part - be that in
web design, photo manipulation (to create images of the new
characters as well as altered versions of the more well known ones)
and writing (to work on prequels, background stories and other
things) - if you want to know how Mace Windu fell to the Dark Side or
how Anakin spent his years as Boba Fett - why don't you write them
yourself! To find out more or to get a copy of the Republic Saga
timeline (a basic outline of the events from the dawn on the galaxy
to the second Republic Saga trilogy mail me at noggins@ic24.net

>Noggs (=-\)
<http://angelfire.com/scifi/republicsaga>

>
REPUBLIC SAGA

>VENGEANCE
CHAPTER SEVEN

>
Torpedos flew towards the Mandalore home-world as Anakin moved

>his starship out of the range of fire. It fired back reducing
an
incoming TIE Fighter to ashes in front of their eyes. Another
dived

>towards them but was finished off in several shots.
"I always
wondered why they don't have shields," Anakin smiled. "Surely

>the ways things are going it would have been more cost effective."
"This isn't the time for any of your jokes, father," Leia responded,
>moving the vessel away from three TIEs coming at them at record speed.
She pulled up and turned back at them as Anakin blasted them. Two
>span through space until they collided and exploded in an array of
colours.
>
"We may not survive this. They have greater numbers...."

>"They're not being flown by me are they?" Anakin boasted as he took
out another enemy fighter.
>"Yarori is still in trouble. If the Mandalore weren't prepared they
could be dead by now!"
>"They'll be okay. If they are not then it was their own foolishness
that caused it."
>"That's all fair and good - but our lives rest in their hands!" Leia
exclaimed.
>"No, my daughter - our lives rest in the Force."

>They swerved once more as the Jedi reached out with his mind. He fired
five shots all of which hit their targets with the precision no human
>could possibly have.
"The Force is with us. That is the most important thing of all."
>"I don't know how I doubted you," Leia sighed. "But the fact remains
we still need to..."
>
With that over twenty Mandalore vessels emerged from the atmosphere
>of Yarori, firing in all directions leaving the squadron of TIE Fighters
in ruins within mere seconds. The comm-channel opened and Leia answered.
>"Sorry about the delay, princess," Keylar's voice said. "But we had
to mobilise all of our troops for the first time in too long."

>"It doesn't look like you're out of practice though."
"Of course not. Now - head for the Star Destroyers - we can finish
>them off and victory will be ours."
The speakers clicked off. Anakin looked at his daughter and gave a
>knowing smile. "Setting a course for Star Destroyer in Sector AA-56."

>The first three Mandalore fightercraft headed towards the Star Destroyer
just ahead of them. Their almost perfectly designed engines allowed
>them to avoid any incoming blasts from the Imperials before letting
off four proton torpedos each. They penetrated the deflector shields
>as if there were nothing there and went straight through the bridge
section. It started to move off course into another below it. Both
>Imperial cruisers exploded suddenly. The Mandalore and Jedi cheered.
"I never could picture them as farmers," Leia grinned as she locked
>onto their target. "Fire away!"

>Anakin let rip on the Imperials. Three shuttles evacuated the vessel
just as it exploded almost as if it was as puny as a TIE Fighter. The
>Shuttles entered hyperspace quickly followed by several more Star
Destroyers.
>"Let's give them something to remember us by!" Anakin said as he
began to enter hyperspace co-ordinates.

>"What are you doing?"
"Something that could get us both killed..."

>"What?!?"
"... but won't if I pull it off right."

>
The Mandalore starship began to accelerate after the Imperials and

>was soon covered in a familiar blue light. Just ahead of them were
the Star Destroyers, retreating from the battle. Anakin shot a

>proton torpedo and dropped below lightspeed as the hyperspace tunnel
collapses around the enemies. The came to a stop and Leia looked

>at her father, her eyes open as wide as they could.
"Did you just do what Ithought you did?"

>"I went into hyperspace to destroy the tunnel around them. I think
it worked effectively."

>"It looked like it. But we could have died!"

>Anakin shook his head sadly. "Surely you have enough faith in the
living Force to know it will guide us in battle."

>"Yes... of course..."
"I worry about you, Leia," Anakin said, his voice becoming more

>concerned. "The Force is in your very blood. You accept its existence
yet you do not trust it. A Jedi must do both."

>"It's just I don't understand what it can do..."
"In time you will learn. You will become a powerful Jedi Knight."

>
Leia blushed a little. She never thought of herself as a Jedi. Her

>adopted father had told her tales of them but with the Empire trying
to write them out of history she was beginning to think they were

>only myths until she met Luke and now her father.

>The computer console gave a bleeping sound. Anakin opened at comm-
channel with Keylar. "So, what made you change your mind?" he asked.

>"Your speech affected the High Council more than you thought. They
were outraged at first but realised their anger should be directed

>not at you but at the Empire. You did a good job, Jedi Skywalker.
If you would like to return to the planet we can continue our

>talks. More successfully this time, I hope."

>* * * * *

>The news of the battle reached New Naboo soon after the Empire had
retreated. Chancellor Mothma held a meeting in her office for the

>high ranking officers. Lando was the last to enter. He made his
apologies and sat down.

>
"We have won a battle on two fronts this day," she began. "Not

>only have we caused another dent in the Imperial armour but also
we have conquered our past fears and made contact with a race

>that had been held in contempt for so long. If the Jedi there are
successful we should soon have the Mandalore in our ranks. With

>a military force of that magnitude victory in this war will be
inevitable."

>"But what are the plans after we have regained control of the
galaxy?" the Rodian Jedi Master Yarle asked.

>
Mothma looked over to Ackbar. He stood forward and began speaking.

>"Once we have Coruscant most of the job will be done. Anyone
is
control of the galactic capital should wield enough power to

>ensure systems stay in line."
"And what about after that?" Yarled
continued.

>"Well, obviously military bases will be set up in strategic
locations
including Correllia and..."

>
"I don't entirely agree with that course of action," Lando said

>interrupting. "What made the Old Republic have the power it
did
were the Jedi. They maintained peace without a dictatorship.

>From what you are saying you are setting the basis for a
New
Empire not a New Republic."

>"Of course Jedi will have an important part to play. However
at
the moment their numbers are low - not even close to the ten

>thousand that patrolled during the Old Republic. Until then
they
are vulnerable."

>"You don't understand the Force, do you Admiral?" Calrissian
smirked.
"It is not something that lets you throw things around.
It is what

>gives a Jedi his or her power and one Jedi filled with it has
more
power than an entire fleet of Republic starships."

>"I don't see how this is relevant, general," Mon Mothma said
taking
over from Ackbar who was becoming increasingly nervous.

"The fact

>remains, an take-over is going to occur and it will happen
within
the next year. Hopefully by that time the numbers of the
Jedi will

>have increased."

>Several Republic senators agreed however the Jedi and Lando
were
silent throughout. The meeting ended and Calrissian met with
his

>brother outside. "How'd it go?" he asked.
"Badly for the Jedi.
Sadly Leia and Anakin's victory has only

>fuelled Mothma's determination to rule without us..."
"Us?" the
clone asked.

>"I mean the Jedi..." he quickly said as he began to walk down
the
corridor.

>
* * * * *

>
On Yarori, the second meeting with the Mandalore High Council
had

>gone successfully. The leaders had finally decided to put
past
differences behind them and help the Republic enter a new
era.

>Anakin had applauded them before leaving with Keylar.
"Do you
really think this will last?" the ambassador asked.

>"Of course," Skywalker replied. "If there is enough will power
on
both side, and a little give and take, I honestly believe things

>are going to change."
"It's not my people I'm worried about. Many
still fear the Republic

>is as weak as it was when the Empire was born."
Anakin shook his
head. "It wasn't weakness that caused the transition.

>It was corrupt officials, and more importantly a corrupt
Chancellor."

>Keylar nodded but still seemed wary. "And you can trust
Chancellor
Mothma?"

>"I don't know her well by my daughter does. Enough to trust her

completely."
"How did they meet?"
>"Leia's adopted father was a close friend of Mothma during the Clone Wars. Bail Organa... Have you heard of him?"
>"Not directly. I was on a starship that nearly destroyed a Republic transport that he was on once."
>"Oh."

>Anakin fell silent and continued walking. Keylar picked up his pace.
"But we didn't kill him. At least that's good."
>"uh-huh," Anakin said.
"It wasn't like I was pressing the buttons to fire..."
>"Yup."
"C'mon, you're supposed to be a Jedi - forgiving and forget. He was one of our enemies at the time"
Anakin turned to Keylar with a smile on his face. "To be honest
>I never really liked him."

>* * * * *

>Leia sat alone in her room. She was quietly meditating, trying to make sense of the feelings she was developing. How could she feel
>close to someone who wanted to kill her? There was something unique about Mara... something dark but at the same time light. She was
>treading a thin line between the both and was successful in not crossing over to either. It amazed Leia. She found the other woman
>intriguing and deadly at the same time.

>"There is no emotion, only peace," she muttered to herself in order to concentrate on her task but just couldn't relax. The door opened
>and Anakin entered.
"Hello my daughter. All has gone well. I'm surprised you didn't want
>to be there yourself since it was you who started the whole thing."
"I needed to think."
>"About what? What happened during the battle. I'm sorry I spoke to you the way I did. I guess you don't realise its possible to be

>reckless and a Jedi at the same time. I'm just trying to relive my early years long after my prime. I apologise."

>
Leia didn't move, keeping her eyes trained into empty space.
"It's
>not that. It's about back on the starship with that Jade woman."
Anakin sat next to his daughter and put his arm around her shoulder.
>"What did she do?"
"I... I don't know. There was something... I don't know!"
>"It is something. I can sense the torment. Tell me what's on your mind. I can help."
>"You can't. It's beyond help..."
"Nothing is beyond help."

>"Maybe so, but I have to deal with it alone. I'm sure you trust my judgement."
>"Of course."

>Leia went back to her meditation, this time successfully calming her mind and slipping into a trance-like state. Anakin left her alone
>and went to wander the halls of the Mandalore outpost.

>* * * * *

>Lando and his brother sat in their quarters. The latter listened as the other threw names around randomly.

>"Bareen?"
"That's a female name!"
>"Okay, okay. How about Dri'Rik?"
"Do I look like a Twi-Lek?"

>"No... Man, now I know how my parents felt when they had to come
up with a name for me!"
>"What were they like?"
"Great. Dad seemed busy all the time but I guess he only did it for
>me. I left home when I was sixteen and never went back. I was a little
too rebellious I guess. I hated the order they imposed on me. I didn't
>realise it was the Imperial rule over the planet."
"What was his name?"
>"Who? Dad? Narril. Narril Calrissian."

>The clone smiled. "Y'know I kinda like that."
"You've found yourself a name?"
>"I think so," the newly christened Narril replied as he mouthed the name
quietly, trying to get used to it. "Yeah, I like that."

>
* * * * *
>
A starship came out of hyperspace just above Coruscant and moved

>towards the upper parts of the cityscape. It passed the inspection
probes with ease then came to land on a civilian docking platform.
>The door slid open and Mara Jade emerged. She looked out at the
endless skyscrapers. It wouldn't be long before Thrawn found her
>on this planet despite the number of places she could hide.

>After setting the ship to autopilot and letting it zoom off back
into space she hailed an air taxi to take her as far away as possible
>from the Imperial Centre with stretched higher than any other building
on the planet.
>
"So where ya goin'?" the Quermian pilot asked politely.
>"As far away from here as possible."
"Why don't you just get off the planet if its that bad? The Empire's
>getting worse. If you're on its bad side I wouldn't recommend
staying here."
>"What makes you think I'm an enemy of the Empire?" Mara said before
falling silent. Her comment had the same effect on the driver who
>quickly closed his mouth worrying whether or not she would report him
to any officials.
>
The journey gave Mara a time to think everything over. Se was filled
>with anger at Thrawn for using her like he did but more towards
Leia for what the Jedi princess had reduced her to - on the run
>after the death of the only man who made her feel safe. She began
to realise that it was Palpatine's presence keeping her from disappearing
>from Coruscant. She had to kill the murderer of her master.

>* * * * *

>The hyperspace tunnel broke open with a loud bang and a Super Star
Destroyer came out, battered from the rough journey as the only
>passageway had collapsed behind it. It moved to orbit the Imperial
capital. On the bridge the captain breathed a sigh of

relief.

>"We're out!" an officer called out.
"I will inform Emperor Thrawn immediately."

>
Captain Dasson walked nervously to Thrawn's private chamber. He

>noticed the door was sealed with multiple command codes.

He
activated the caller and waited for a response.

>"Yes?" the voice within asked.
"We have arrived back at

Coruscant. It doesn't appear as if the

>rest of the fleet survived."
"Which officer was at the helm during the journey?"

>"Commander Craxon."

>There was no response. Dasson made his way back to the bridge

to
discover everyone crowding around a body. The captain pushed his

>way through the crowd of Imperial officers to find Craxon,

his
throat crushed, seemingly from the inside. He glanced back in

>the direction he had just come and swallowed loudly.

>* * * * *

>Thrawn sat in his private chamber talking to a figure in the

shadows.
"As you can see my officers are foolish. The Empire will remain

>weak without a wielder of the dark energies in command. It

was
born out of the Dark Side of the Force and without it there is

>little hope of it surviving."
"Indeed," the voice replied.

>"That is why I have called upon you. It is time we stepped up
our assault by targeting the Jedi in particular. I'm sure

>you agree with me."
"Of course. The Jedi are more of a threat than the whole Republic.

>I know that from experience." The red and black tattooed Zabrak came
out of the darkness. His body was covered in wires and black metal

>plating but the ferocity of the Sith had not been lost.

>"I know you do... Lord Maul. You will not fail me."
"Of course not, my master..."

>Thrawn placed his hand on the Sith Lord's head and smiled.

Things
were going to change. Starting now...

>
THE END..... FOR NOW

>
To be continued in 'REPUBLIC SAGA: ALLIANCES' coming soon.

End

file.